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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND AMERICAN DEMOCRACY. WALTER SCOTT ATHEARN. The Pilgrim Press. 1917. Pp. xiii, 394. \$1.50.

"The problem of the book," says the author, "is the *organization* of religious education in the American democracy" (p. viii). To quote the author again, what he gives us is a "blue print to guide future development" (p. 17). If the term "big business" may be used in a eulogistic rather than dyslogistic sense, we are here summoned to big business in religious education as contrasted with the wasteful and ineffective methods of small-shop denominationalism. It is possible, Professor Athearn believes, so to organize a system of coördinated public schools and church schools as to "guarantee to every child both intelligence and godliness" (p. 21). In almost every detail of this ambitious scheme there is reflected a lively, bustling, adventurous, unconventional, pungent mind.

The outstanding requirements of the proposed re-organization may be summarily stated as follows:

(1) It must be entirely separate from the schools of the State — a second complete school system.

(2) In addition to denominational agencies it must include organs, both local and national, that are directly representative of the populace as a whole, and therefore free from denominational control. The author holds strenuously to the opinion that any mere federation of denominational organs or agencies or representatives would subject the common good to partisan interests.

(3) It must be comprehensive, must reach all the way from the kindergarten to the university. In particular, teacher-training will be provided on the high-school level, the college level, and the graduate-college level.

(4) It must provide professional supervision capable of reaching every local community, and available for any church school that desires it.

(5) It must develop methods of its own by direct research of an experimental sort, particularly with respect to "prejudice," sentiment, and ideals, an area of the mind to which public-school methods have given little attention.

(6) It must establish and maintain standards that will enable it to deal with the public-school system, in all matters that require coördination therewith, "on terms of absolute equality" (p. 107).

(7) If one asks where and how such an elaborate organization is to be started, the answer is that a start has been made already in certain community-schools or systems of religious education, notably the one at Malden, Mass., of which Professor Athearn himself is the

head. Such schools, it is believed, could easily be multiplied, and a next natural step would be a general federation or union of them. Moreover, certain existing organizations that are not under ecclesiastical control might be woven into the new fabric. The Religious Education Association is adapted to serve as the professional association of the leaders of religious education. The International Sunday School Association might possibly be reconstructed so as to serve as a general supervisory and promotional body. Even the American Sunday School Union might have a part.

Let no one ignore this scheme on the ground that it is too ambitious to be practical, or even that it is fundamentally defective. For we need to face, not to run away from, the problem that Professor Athearn has attacked so vigorously. Religious education in this country, as far as organization is concerned, is too nearly chaotic to be creditable to the American mind. The drastic analysis of this situation in Chapter IV has not been printed a day too soon. Especial attention may be called to his summary on page 239, a summary of duplications, confusions, and expenses, all of which must be regarded, ultimately, as burdens that the children have to bear.

His fundamental contentions are likely to arouse doubt at one point at least. Is the creation of still another set of religious organizations — organizations that are expected to include the members of all the churches — is this the shortest road to efficiency? If we had to deal with a new element of population, or with a new function, possibly a new set of organs would be best; but no such reason is alleged. Further, some essential questions with regard to the proposed new bodies are touched upon all too lightly. There must be within them, Professor Athearn reiterates, "absolute academic freedom" (p. 154 f.). Just what "absolute" academic freedom means is not clear; certainly the universities claim nothing of the kind for themselves. On the other hand, the community-system of religious education is to be controlled by persons "of the most profound religious experience" (p. 155). One wonders how this item of administration is to be managed, particularly in a system of "absolute academic freedom." One wonders too whether references to what the churches "must" do (pp. 151, 168), and to "granting" to each denomination the "right" to supervise its own religious schools (p. 240), are to be taken as instances of a careless use of language merely or as signs of a state of mind. In relation to this delicate matter one thing is clear in any case: Professor Athearn's assumption that the members of the various religious denominations can actually be induced to enter the proposed non-ecclesiastical

religious organizations is a marked tribute to the growth of liberality within the churches.

Another point on which too little has been said concerns the relation of Jews and Catholics to a religious enterprise that essays to represent the community and the nation. Every detail reads as if the scheme were Protestant. The chapter on "the unification of educational agencies" does not even mention a Catholic or Jewish agency. The Malden system, which furnishes a model, is, in actual operation, as Professor Athearn indicated at the 1918 Conference of the Religious Education Association, an active coöperation of Protestants, with passive acquiescence or non-participation on the part of Catholics and Jews.

A grateful word must be spoken with respect to the general plan of the book, particularly its classified bibliographical lists and its method of raising more questions than it pretends to answer. On the other hand, the typography of the bibliographical notes is about the worst possible, and there are signs of haste.<sup>1</sup> The discussion of the principles of curriculum building, in particular, offers suggestions and headings without taking time or space to indicate clearly what theory of the educative process the author has in mind.

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PROTESTANTISM IN GERMANY. KERR D. MACMILLAN. Princeton University Press. 1917. Pp. viii, 282. \$1.50.

In one sense these lectures belong to the large and rapidly growing class of "tracts for the times" produced by the great war; yet in another sense they constitute a historical essay of independent interest and value, such as might be written at any time. The author is President of Wells College, and the lectures were delivered on the Stone foundation at Princeton Theological Seminary in the year 1916-17. They aim to trace the course of German Protestantism

<sup>1</sup> I venture to catalogue the following: P. 3, "average level of . . . intelligence" and "average citizen" obviously do not state the author's meaning; p. 12 confuses moral training with teaching ethics; p. 42, "References on Reconstruction of Educational Theory Due to the World War" are listed under the general heading, "The Parochial Schools"; pp. 148, 224, "McMurry" is misspelled; p. 148, data "is"; pp. 180, 181, the phrase "association of church schools" is used to designate an entirely non-denominational body; p. 199, lines 8-9, "International" is an interpolation and an incorrect interpretation; p. 220, what is meant by "the present graded curriculum"?